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THE UNION MEETING.

The annual gathering of our Churches and Pastors is again at hand. Probably before another issue of this Magazine may have reached the remote parts of the wide field represented by that assembly, many of our readers will have set out on their journey to Hamilton. The present is, therefore, our only opportunity of uttering a few preparatory thoughts. Wherefore should a hundred, or more, of our Christian brotherhood come up from the extensive region embraced within such extreme points as Quebec in the East, and Sarnia in the West, for several days' annual conference?

Not for the purpose of submitting either the standing of the Ministers, or the proceedings of the Churches to a *court of supervision*. These local matters are, as we assert, entirely beyond the province of the "Union." We believe, with William Bradshaw, that—"Christ has not subjected any church or congregation to any other superior ecclesiastical jurisdiction than to that which is within itself; so that, if a whole church, or congregation should err in any matters of faith, or worship, no churches or spiritual officers have power to censure, or punish them; but are only to counsel and advise them." The absence of this control constitutes the distinctive feature of the Congregational Union, compared with Presbyterian Synods, and Methodist Conferences.

But while jealously guarding the independence of the several local churches, and refusing, even by mutual agreement of aggrieved parties, to become a court of appeal in reference to Church action, there are many common interests of the Churches, lying outside the province of the local Church, or practically beyond its resources, which, nevertheless, are of vital importance to the Churches and society at large. Such constitute the principal objects contemplated by the "Union."

Of these, the largest in every sense is the work of *Home Evangelization*. Our "Union" is the chief constituency of our Missionary Society; and fitly so, being the only assembly in which the contributing Churches are generally represented. The matters of detail in the management of our missions are seldom, if ever, discussed by the Union, being entrusted to a General Committee chosen annually, by ballot. But the Union, together with individual subscribers of one dollar annually, or twenty dollars in one sum, constitutes the Society, having the right of amending the Constitution, reviewing its